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May 31, 2004

ARTILLERY SOLDIERS IN V CORPS' 1ST ARMORED DIVISION TRAINING FOR NEW BAGHDAD MISSION

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BAGHDAD, Iraq – Soldiers in V Corps' Battery C, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, have been patrolling the streets and conducting raids here for the past year.



SPC JEANINE KINVILLE

Staff Sgt. Timothy Goldstein, a section chief in C Battery, 4th Battalion, 27th Field Artillery Regiment, trains with another Soldier role-playing as a detainee at a training site on Baghdad International Airport.

Now the 1st Armored Division battalion, headquartered at Baghdad International Airport, is now preparing for a new mission.

"This new mission is completely different," said 1st Lt. Eric Hallgren, a Battery C platoon leader.

"We will be patrolling areas to catch people putting (improvised explosive devices) on the roads. These roads include main and alternate supply routes that Soldiers and civilians frequently use."

Leaders within the battery have started Military

Operations in Urban Terrain training to teach their Soldiers patrolling and raiding techniques by conducting mock cordon-and-search operations.

"We keep training to become better Soldiers," said Hallgren. "We put the Soldiers in different scenarios to better prepare ourselves for the real battle. You never know what's going to happen when you go out."

The artillery Soldiers have been conducting this training nightly for the several weeks.

"Repetition is the key to confidence," said Hallgren. "As we do things more often, we can train new Soldiers and retrain other Soldiers. Training establishes confidence in yourself and your fellow battle buddy."

When the platoon is in an assigned sector, they conduct patrols in the area. The battalion assigns targets based on information obtained from several sources, including local Iraqis.

"Our primary targets are 'funders' of attacks on Americans and coalition forces," said Hallgren.

When Soldiers prepare to begin a cordon-and-search operation, radios keep them in touch with their platoon leader while he and another team secure the perimeter.

"I monitor the radio and all communications," said Spc. Robert Scott, a cannon crewmember with the battalion's C, Battery. "I call up situational reports to the commander in situations like enemy attacks, casualties, and loss of positions."

Once squads are in position, they dismount to begin the cordon-and-search.

"We set up security around the first house while the search team clears the house," said cannon crewmember Spc. Michael Powell. "My team's mission is going into the training village to get the target."

When a suspect is detained, he is searched for contraband which could include weapons, pro-Saddam Hussein paraphernalia and bomb-making supplies. Any contraband found is turned over to military police.

"Every illegal weapon we find is one less casualty of an American Soldier or Iraqi," said Hallgren.

With this training, Hallgren said he has no doubt the training has prepared his troops for the missions ahead of them.

"I have the utmost confidence that when I go out, I can depend on the guy to my left and my right," said Hallgren. "No matter when happens, the mission will always get accomplished."

